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SENATOR CARDIN APPLAUDS SENATE CONFIRMATION OF KAREN GORDON MILLS AS SBA ADMINISTRATOR

Senator Urges New Era of Advocacy for Small Businesses

WASHINGTON – **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin** (D-MD), a member of the Senate Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship, today applauded Senate confirmation of Karen Gordon Mills as the new administrator of the Small Business Administration (SBA).

Senator Cardin has been critical of SBA's management under the Bush Administration, noting that over the past eight years, the agency has been understaffed and underfunded. During her confirmation hearing, Senator Cardin urged Ms. Mills to *"be a strong advocate for small businesses and to take steps to reform the agency."*

Senator Cardin also said the SBA must take a far more active role in ensuring that disadvantaged, veteran- and women-owned businesses have greater access to prime contracts, and said that he would expect regular progress reports on her efforts. He also urged her to help ensure that financial institutions start lending again to small businesses and that small businesses get their fair share of economic stimulus funding.

"The SBA should be a strong advocate and facilitator for small businesses and for minority-, veteran- and women-owned businesses. Unfortunately, under the previous Administration, too little was done to support small businesses and to help them succeed."

"We are now in the midst of a serious economic downturn and I am confident that Ms. Mills and the Obama Administration are committed to reversing past practices that have hindered the success of programs to assist minority, veteran and women-owned businesses"

Senator Cardin also urged Ms. Mills to immediately address problems in the HUBZone program, which promotes the establishment of business opportunities in underutilized neighborhoods. A GAO report recently discovered fraud in the program, and Senator Cardin has urged that the program be reformed. There are currently 254 HUB zone businesses in Maryland, which provide special set asides for underutilized communities.

“This is an extremely valuable program for areas that need to build their business base,” said Senator Cardin. “I am looking forward to working with Ms. Mills to address the program’s shortfalls and rebuild this program to serve needy communities.”

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